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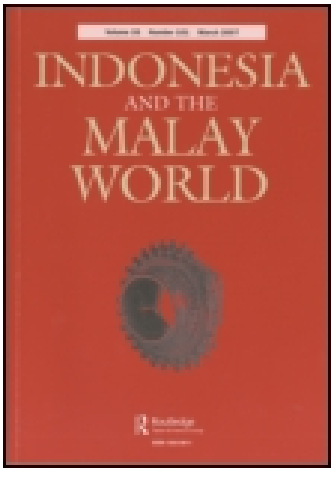

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Christina Skott

LINNAEUS AND THE TROGLODYTE
Early European encounters with the Malay world and the natural history of man

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This article explores the ways in which early modern knowledge of the Malay world informed European science, through a case study of the classification of humans in the work of the Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus. In the 1758 edition of his Systema Naturae, Linnaeus proposed an entirely new species of human, Homo troglodytes, a counterpoint to Homo sapiens, said to be a resident of the Malay world. Whereas this 'different' species has hitherto been seen through Linnaeus' application of his own taxonomic principles, and has also been dismissed as a product of an uncritical reliance on 'travel lies' of the day, this article takes the Homo troglodytes back to his assumed natural habitat. Through a detailed examination of Linnaeus' sources and the genealogies of European writing on the Malay world in the 18th century a complex picture emerges, framed by local folklore and an early modern 'ethnography of difference'. Crucially, it is suggested that information about the Malay world available to Linnaeus was ultimately generated by the unique ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the region, in particular the ambivalent relationships between the ethnically different peoples of the coast and interior, a longstanding theme in Southeast Asian history. The figure of the troglodyte then becomes a powerful interlocutor between interpretations of the diversity of the Malay world that served to shape not only natural history, but also Enlightenment debates on the relationship between man and beast.

Keywords: Carl Linnaeus; Enlightenment science; classification of humans; orang-utan; troglodyte; travel writing

Introduction

Editors of early modern cosmographic literature often found it necessary to point out that, in comparison to India and China, the region now termed Southeast Asia was largely unknown. In the 1657 edition of his *Cosmographie* the English cosmographer Peter Heylyn introduced the region declaring that he could not 'be so exact and punctual as before', as these lands were 'not so well known to the Greeks or Romans as the others

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were, by reason of remoteness of their situation; nor so well discovered at the present' (Heylyn 1657: 905). As modern scholars have shown, classical as well as biblical references would hold their grip on Europe's knowledge of Asia until the 18th century (Marshall and Williams 1982) and more than any other part of the 'East-Indies' the Malay world was perceived as the home of the ancient 'wonders of the East', a land of curious beings and marvellous flora and fauna. This image was sustained by Dutch reluctance to allow publications on their possessions in the East, which meant that early modern European compilers of knowledge had to lean on outdated travel literature, describing a multitude of small kingdoms and trading ports peopled by multi-ethnic trading communities. It was clear that the region did not easily lend itself to being compressed and generalised, in the way China and India did.

A survey of British knowledge of the world has described new information about the Malay world in the 18th century consisting of 'a trickle of books' (Marshall and Williams 1982: 79). Still, it is well known that this time also saw an unprecedented outpouring of new travel literature which brought information about unknown lands in Asia and elsewhere to a European reading public. This body of knowledge was closely intertwined with colonial expansion, but also constituted the raw material for what is now termed the European Enlightenment, as philosophers eagerly trawled through travel literature describing exotic lands, peoples and societies for opportunities to hold these up as 'Europe's mirror' (Outram 1995: 63–79). One of the enduring themes of Enlightenment discussions was the 'science of man', where philosophers and scientists alike debated man's relationship with the natural world and the progress of civilisation. One particularly intense debate concerned the relationship between humans and animals: what were the qualities which made man 'human', and where should the line between man and beast be drawn? These debates revolved to a great extent around a figure commonly referred to as the 'Ourang-Outang', assumed to reside in Africa and the 'East-Indies', more precisely in the Malay world. The question was whether this creature, whose human-like behaviour was described by a variety of travellers, in fact was a primitive sort of human.[1]

Perhaps the most celebrated scientist of the mid 18th century was the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778), who in the then slim volume *Systema Naturae* (1735) had proposed a new system of classifying the natural world according to a binominal nomenclature. Until his death in 1778 Linnaeus refined and developed his taxonomy, which was more systematic and technical than previous systems; through a careful examination of reproductive organs and other traits it would now be possible to slot every plant and animal anywhere in the world into a taxonomical grid of genera and species. Never a modest man, Linnaeus set out to map the global natural world in a series of publications, most notably the ever enlarged editions of *Systema Naturae*. The tenth edition of this work, published in 1758, was ground breaking on several fronts. Perhaps the most controversial novelty was Linnaeus' suggestion that humankind was in fact made up of two different species; in addition to *Homo Sapiens* Linnaeus proposed a new human species, termed *Homo troglodytes* or *Homo nocturnus*. In 1760 a further species, *Homo caudatus* (tailed man), was proposed. The main habitat of these, Linnaeus claimed, was the Malay world.

[1]It has, for example, been suggested that Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of 'natural man' presented in his *Discours sur l'inégalité* in fact was a description of an orang-utan (Wokler 1978).

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The idea that humankind was made up of more than one species faced criticism and ridicule from Linnaeus' fellow scientists as well as theologians, and the 'different' species of humans would not be mentioned in subsequent editions of the *Systema*. Modern commentators on Linnaeus' classification of man have sought to explain the *Homo troglodytes* from within Linnaeus' own ideas and taxonomical theories. It is immediately obvious that the troglodyte was a composite figure assembled from a variety of sources, most importantly confusing information about higher apes, mixed with reports of individual cases of albinism (achromia). Crucially, it has been assumed that Linnaeus simply had been duped by outdated travel accounts, that he uncritically accepted 'travel lies' of the day, still mixed with both classical imagery and medieval myth (Hodgen 1964: 426; Koerner 1999: 87; Schiebinger 1994: 80; Tinland 1968: 94). For some scholars, the troglodyte and tailed man have constituted the ultimate proof of Linnaeus' superstition and his continued belief in the marvellous, presented as the ultimate illustration of the backwardness of Linnaean science: how could there be a Swedish 'Enlightenment' when Linnaeus himself believed in men with tails? (Frängsmyr 1999: 83).

The most thorough investigation of Linnaeus' classification of man, Gunnar Broberg's study *Homo Sapiens L.*, also pointed to Swedish folklore and European legends of 'wild men' living in forests to explain Linnaeus' *Homo troglodytes*, but the crucial question remained: 'Why did he make species of them? Why did he take the trouble to include such stories from notoriously unreliable literature?' (Broberg 1975; 1983: 190).

This article revisits these questions by taking Linnaeus' troglodyte and men with tails back to their presumed natural habitat. By disentangling Linnaeus' sources and considering these within wider European knowledge of the Malay world, a different picture emerges. While it is clear that the creation of the *Homo troglodytes* is closely intertwined with wider issues of 'recycling' of early modern knowledge of the world, the primary aim here is to chart the local production and origins of knowledge, in particular to see how relationships between different ethnic groups generated information transmitted to Europe. These relationships, between upstream (*hulu*) and downstream (*hilir*) peoples, have long been the focus of historical and anthropological research. Furthermore, by mapping and examining the textual detail of information available to Linnaeus, it is not only possible to see the local circumstances which generated this knowledge, but also to highlight the workings of Linnaean science.

Systema Naturae and the dissertation Anthropomorpha

Carl Linnaeus, who in 1763 was ennobled von Linné, was born in southern Sweden in 1707. After studying medicine at the University of Uppsala, he embarked on a journey to Holland, where he would study and work for several years. It was here that he in 1735 first published his *Systema Naturae*, and importantly also had access to travel literature and other sources of information on the East Indies, such as collections of naturalia generated by Dutch trade and presence in the Malay world. In 1737 Linnaeus returned to Sweden, where he took up a chair in medicine and botany at Uppsala. He would not leave Sweden again, but was able to develop and further his project of classifying the natural world with the help of a wide network of collectors and correspondents in Sweden, Europe and further afield. He sent out his own students to far flung corners of the world, resulting in a flow of exotic botanical and zoological specimens arriving in Uppsala, where

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Linnaeus would examine, determine, classify and publish (Sörlin 2000; Sörlin and Fagerstedt 2004). He also took advantage of the activities of the Swedish East India Company, founded in 1735. The company sailed mainly to Canton, from where captains, supercargoes and common sailors brought back journals, reports, plants and animals, some alive, others skilfully preserved (Frängsmyr 1976; Skott 2013a).

By mid 18th century Linnaeus had become one of Europe's most celebrated scientists. Students from all over Europe travelled to Uppsala to be instructed in the new system by the master himself, and within a few decades his taxonomical principles would be in use throughout Europe. But the road to fame was not entirely smooth, as Linnaeus' publications caused controversy among both fellow scientists and theologians. He had, for example, from the start controversially included man himself in the animal kingdom, under the order *Quadrupedia*, four-legged animals. In the first edition of the *Systema* he introduced the concept *Anthropomorpha*, human-like beings, consisting of the genera *Homo* (man), *Simia* (apes, monkeys) and *Bradypus* (the sloth). Of these, only *Homo* was said to possess reason, and was characterised by the words *Nosce te ipsum* (know thyself). The species *Homo* was divided into four varieties according to the continents, *Homo Europaeus albescens* (whitish European), *Homo Americanus rubescens* (reddish American), *Homo Asiaticus fuscus* (dark coloured Asian), and *Homo Africanus niger* (black African) (see Sloan 1995: 122–3). The species of *Simiae* were gradually increased. In the 1748 edition of *Systema*, for example, the *Simiae* consisted of 16 species, two of which were tailless apes (primates): the *Simia satyrus*, and *Simia sylvanus*, reflecting the new knowledge of the zoology of Asia and Africa which 18th-century European travellers brought back to Europe.

The first volume of the tenth and much enlarged edition of *Systema Naturae* (1758) stands out as an almost completely new work. It is here that the binominal system was fully applied to animals. The term *Mammalia* (mammals) is now used for the first time. The first zoological order is named *Primates*, divided up into the genera *Homo*, *Simia*, and *Lemur* (half apes). The older division of the species *Homo* into four 'races' was kept, but the varieties were now described in more detail: the 'Asian' variety was seen as 'sallow, melancholic, stiff; hair black, dark eyes; severe, haughty, avaricious, covered with loose garments; governed by opinions'. The skin colour of the *Homo Asiaticus*, earlier given as *fuscus* was now said to be *luridus*, which has been interpreted as 'a sickly yellow' colour, something which has been seen as the origins of the concept of a 'yellow race' (Keevak 2011).[2] Man was now also incorporated into the binominal system, under the name *Homo sapiens* (also called *Homo diurnus*, day man), who was given a counterpart in a proposed new species, *Homo troglodytes*, also called *Homo nocturnus* (night man). In a footnote the *Homo troglodytes* is also referred to as *Homo caudatus* (tailed man)[3] (Linnaeus 1758: 29).

In the *Systema*, *Homo troglodytes* is only briefly mentioned. A more detailed description is found in an academic dissertation written by Linnaeus in 1760 for one of his students at Uppsala, the Russian aristocrat Christian Emanuel Hoppius (1736–?). The dissertation, entitled *Anthropomorpha*, was published in Latin in 1763 (Linnaeus 1763),

[2]While not acknowledged in Keevak (2011), Linnaeus' description of the Asian variety may well have been based on information about China which at this time flowed into Sweden via the Swedish East India Company.

[3]A third species *Homo ferus* (wild man), described as mute and hairy was based on a few individual cases of people found living in isolation in European forests.

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but has also survived in its original handwritten Swedish version, entitled *Menniskans Cousiner* (Cousins of man; Linné 1955).[4] Here, the *Homo troglodytes* and *Homo caudatus* are seen as two separate species and described in more detail.[5] The aim of the dissertation, Linnaeus wrote, was to present the four 'nations' seen as man's closest relatives, namely the tailless apes *Simia pygmaeus*, *Simia satyrus* and the human species *Homo troglodytes* and *Homo caudatus*.

Furthest away from man we find the new species *Simia pygmaeus*. The anatomical details provided here were taken from the Englishman George Edward's examination of the skin of a chimpanzee. The *Pygmaeus* was said to originate in Africa, 'but apart from that we do not know anything at all about his habits and "household" in his native place'. The second 'nation', the *Simia satyrus* was also African, found in Angola. References were made to Nicolas Tulp's description of a chimpanzee (see below). Linnaeus repeated Tulp's comments that 'she' in her native environment rape 'our kind', and behaves in a human-like way, before going to bed she ties a scarf round her head, looking like 'an old lady' (Linné 1955: 6–8).

With the third 'nation', the *Homo caudatus*, the line between man and beast has been crossed. Linnaeus (Linné 1955: 8–9) wrote that people with tails are in close 'cousinage with us'. They live in the East Indies, on some islands 'closer to the south pole', and are also found in the Nicobar islands and on Java. The men with tails, Linnaeus (Linné 1955: 8–9) wrote, 'have not yet been depicted', apart from 'Aldrovandus'. This referred to a woodcut of a tailed monkey in a publication by the Italian 16th-century naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi. In a footnote Linnaeus stated that tailed men were to be found in the mountainous interior of Borneo, and that 'our men' had encountered these at the court of the king of 'Succodana' (Sukadana), confirming that the tail was short and hairless. Furthermore, Linnaeus claimed that 'numerous travellers have written about this Person, and among them our Köping has seen him and described him in detail' (Linné 1955: 8–9). A travel account by the Swede Nils Matson Köping was then quoted at length; in the Nicobars, natives had entered Köping's ship, wanting to exchange parrots for iron nails. The sailors were not interested, but the tailed men swarmed over the ship, stealing any metal they could see. The men were 'ugly people, of black-yellow colour, with tails resembling cats' tails, but hairless' (Linné 1955: 8–9).

The species closest to *Homo sapiens* was *Homo troglodytes,* also called *Homo nocturnus*, 'night man', since he 'makes day into night and night into day'. This species was said to live in Ethiopia, Java, Amboina, Mount Ophir in Malacca, and the islands of Ternate. A physical description of the troglodytes was provided:

> They are white as snow and the size of a nine year old child, walk upright and have short curly white hair. They live mostly in caves and were equipped with eyes resembling those of an owl's, enabling them to see in the dark. They have their own language, spoken as a hissing sound produced in the throat. Their language

[4]Linnaeus often dictated his dissertations in Swedish, after which they were translated into Latin. The original manuscript is kept in the archives of the Linnaean Society, London. Another treatise, entitled 'De Troglodytes', was referred to by Linnaeus in correspondence, but is now lost (Broberg 1975: 179).

[5]This section will only present the text of the dissertation, whereas a further elaboration on the sources will follow below.

> is extremely difficult for other people to learn, unless a long time is spent among them. In 'our language' troglodytes are known to be able to say only 'yes' and 'no'.
> (Linné 1955: 9–12; my translation and abridged)

This general description is followed by more detailed references to individual sources.

The word 'troglodytes', Linnaeus explained, originated from Pliny, who had first described these as Ethiopian cave dwellers. Linnaeus' second reference was Jacobus Bontius, i.e. the Dutch physician Jacob de Bondt (1592–1631), who in a treatise on tropical medicine had described what he, as the first European, named an 'Ourang-Outang' (de Bondt 1658, hereafter Bontius). Linnaeus did not use this term, but in a footnote quoted Bontius saying that these animals walk upright, are shy and hide from people they do not know and show human emotions such as crying and sighing, so that nothing human failed 'her' apart from speech, adding 'the Javanese say that these animals can speak but choose not to, in order not to be made to work for humans' (Linné 1955: 9, note). As a further source Linnaeus mentioned a speech given in 1749 by the President of the Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, Olof Dalin, who had claimed that troglodytes lived in the middle of Africa, were small and lived no longer than 25 years. They were also very proud, believing that they had once ruled the earth, and that their time was still to come.[6]

Linnaeus then went on to quote eyewitness accounts from the East Indies. The first was an anonymous traveller whom Linnaeus had met in Holland. This Dutchman claimed to have seen white people with orange eyes in Java, and so, Linnaeus wrote, had confirmed what numerous travellers had said about the white people of Java. The man had also confirmed that the teeth of the white people were not set apart (Linné 1955: 10). For Linnaeus this was crucial information, as within his taxonomical criteria the position of the teeth determined the difference between man and apes, i.e. these people were not apes.

Among his references Linnaeus gave the most prominence to a travel account by the above mentioned countryman Köping, who was quoted saying that troglodytes were used in the East Indies 'as children', to perform easier manual tasks such as carrying plates to and from the table. Linnaeus also reiterated a story of how the captain of Köping's ship in Ambon had acquired a freshly captured female troglodyte, who at first could neither eat cooked food nor see during the day. When walking, the troglodyte lifted her feet high up, not being used to flat surfaces. Furthermore, Linnaeus wrote that the Dutch naturalist Rumphius (Georg Everhard Rumpf, 1627–1702) had kept a troglodyte in his house in Ambon for eight years, but no further information on this was available, as 'unfortunately his work on the animals is lost'(Linné 1955: 11).[7]

As his last source, Linnaeus mentioned one 'Mr Braad', a Swede recently returned from seven years of travel in the East Indies, who had confirmed to Linnaeus 'what travellers say of these people': Braad had been able to see for himself that the arms of troglodytes were longer than those of humans, and that their fingers reached down to the knees (Linné 1955: 10). For Linnaeus, this recent eyewitness report by a countryman trained in his own system and taxonomy was, it can be argued, the crucial and final confirmation of the existence of a 'different' species of humans.

[6]Dalin had based this on Count Buffon's description of an African albino.

[7]This refers to Rumpf's manuscript 'Amboinsch Dierboek' which was never published and is still lost.

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The dissertation *Anthropomorpha* was accompanied by an engraving which has since been widely disseminated, graphically illustrating the 18th-century idea of 'the great chain of being': the two figures *Pygmaeus* and *Satyrus* standing next to the human species *Homo caudatus* and *Homo troglodytes*. The visual sources were annotated for *Pygmaeus* 'Tyson', *Satyrus* 'Tulpius', *Caudatus* 'Aldrovandus' and *Troglodytes* 'Bontius' (see Figure 1). In summary, Linnaeus here placed the primates, human-like apes firmly in Africa, whereas Bontius' 'ourang-outang' had quietly crossed the line separating man and animal to become the *Homo troglodytes*. Linnaeus did not, however, use the term 'ourang-outang', a central figure in Enlightenment debates about the relationship between man and beast.

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The 'ourang-outang'

In the 18th century the term 'ourang-outang' was used for both African and Asian primates. The often heated debates regarding the 'humanity' of apes revolved around several themes, most importantly anatomy and behaviour. Closely related to anatomy was the question whether apes possessed speech organs, and so at least in theory could speak. Some writers argued that reports of 'human' apes in fact could and should be dismissed as a reflection of outdated European perceptions of a 'marvellous East', and the continued (and misguided) belief in images of pygmies and satyrs transmitted by the classical authors. Linnaeus' revolutionary and controversial move of placing apes and monkeys in the same taxonomical order as humans in the first edition of his *Systema Naturae* (1735) was based mainly on comparative anatomy, but behavioural evidence continued to be central for those arguing for classifying apes as 'primitive humans'. The behaviour of apes could be studied in two ways. Animals brought in captivity to Europe were

FIGURE 1. Illustration accompanying Linnaeus' dissertation *Anthropomorpha*, in *Amoenitates academicae*, vol. 6 (1763). Published by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

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eagerly observed. Here, attention focused largely on the early modern concept of civility, in particular the observance of table manners. But writers also referred to what was thought to be the behaviour of apes in their natural habitat.

Actual eyewitness reports of strange large monkeys behaving like humans reached Europe first from Africa. An early account of Congo by Andrew Battell described an ape referred to as 'pongo', who looked like a man and lived in trees, fed on fruits, could not speak and had no reason, but attacked elephants with sticks and covered its dead. In other early reports from Africa, different names for these apes were proposed according to place of origin, something which caused much confusion in the nomenclature (Dougherty 1995). There was therefore no consensus on the name of these most human-like of creatures until the name 'Ourang-Outang' appeared in a publication by Jacob de Bondt (Bontius), a long time resident of Batavia, whose treatise on tropical medicine, *De Medicina Indorum* was posthumously published in 1641.

Bontius introduced this being through classical imagery, as a confirmation of the existence of the classical satyr. 'Although not even children believe in satyrs with goat's hoofs, sphinxes and butting fauns, yet this amazing monster with its human visage and human manner of groaning and shedding tears does exist' (translation in O'Malley and Magoun 1962: 43–4). Bontius had himself seen several of these animals, one female in particular was very shy with strange men, wept and expressed other human emotions 'so that you might say that no other human characteristic was lacking to her except speech' (translation in O'Malley and Magoun 1962: 43–4). Bontius also wrote that 'the Javanese say that they can speak, but do not choose to do so lest they be compelled to work, but that is ridiculous' (ibid.). The name 'Ourang-Outang', he wrote, meant a 'man of the forest' (*Homo sylvestris*), and 'it is said that they are born of the lust of women of the Indies who mate with apes and monkeys to satisfy their detestable desires' (translation in O'Malley and Magoun 1962: 43–4). The 'ourang-outang' was also depicted in a woodcut as a creature resembling a naked hairy woman with a lion-like mane (Figure 2).[8] As we can see, Bontius' description was quoted almost verbatim in Linnaeus' description of the *Homo troglodytes*. What Linnaeus left out was, however, significant, namely Bontius' comment that it was ridiculous to claim that the being could speak.

The late 17th century saw a number of scientific treatises providing physical descriptions of 'ourang-outangs' who, dead or alive had been examined in Europe. In his *Observationes Medicae* (1641) the Dutch physician Nicolas Tulp (Tulpius, 1593–1674) provided a detailed anatomic description of what was called an 'Indies Satyr' (*Satyrus indicus*), although the specimen described was said to have been brought from Angola and presented to the Prince of Orange. The accompanying illustration, used by Linnaeus for his *Simia satyrus*, clearly depicted a female chimpanzee, and Tulp explained that it is called 'ourang-outang' because it resembles man. He also reported hearing from a friend, who had been told by the King of the 'Sambaceni',[9] that in Borneo 'these Satyrs' were very bold and strong and frequently attacked men and women. They were also 'extremely inclined to venery – which characteristic they have in common with the lustful Satyr of the ancients' (O'Malley and Magoun 1962). Later in the 17th century the English physician and anatomist Edward Tyson (1650–1708) dissected a chimpanzee brought in from Angola,

[8]This was clearly based on an earlier woodcut of a primate, published by Gesner.

[9]This seems to refer to either Sambas or Sukadana in west Borneo where the Dutch had factories at this time.

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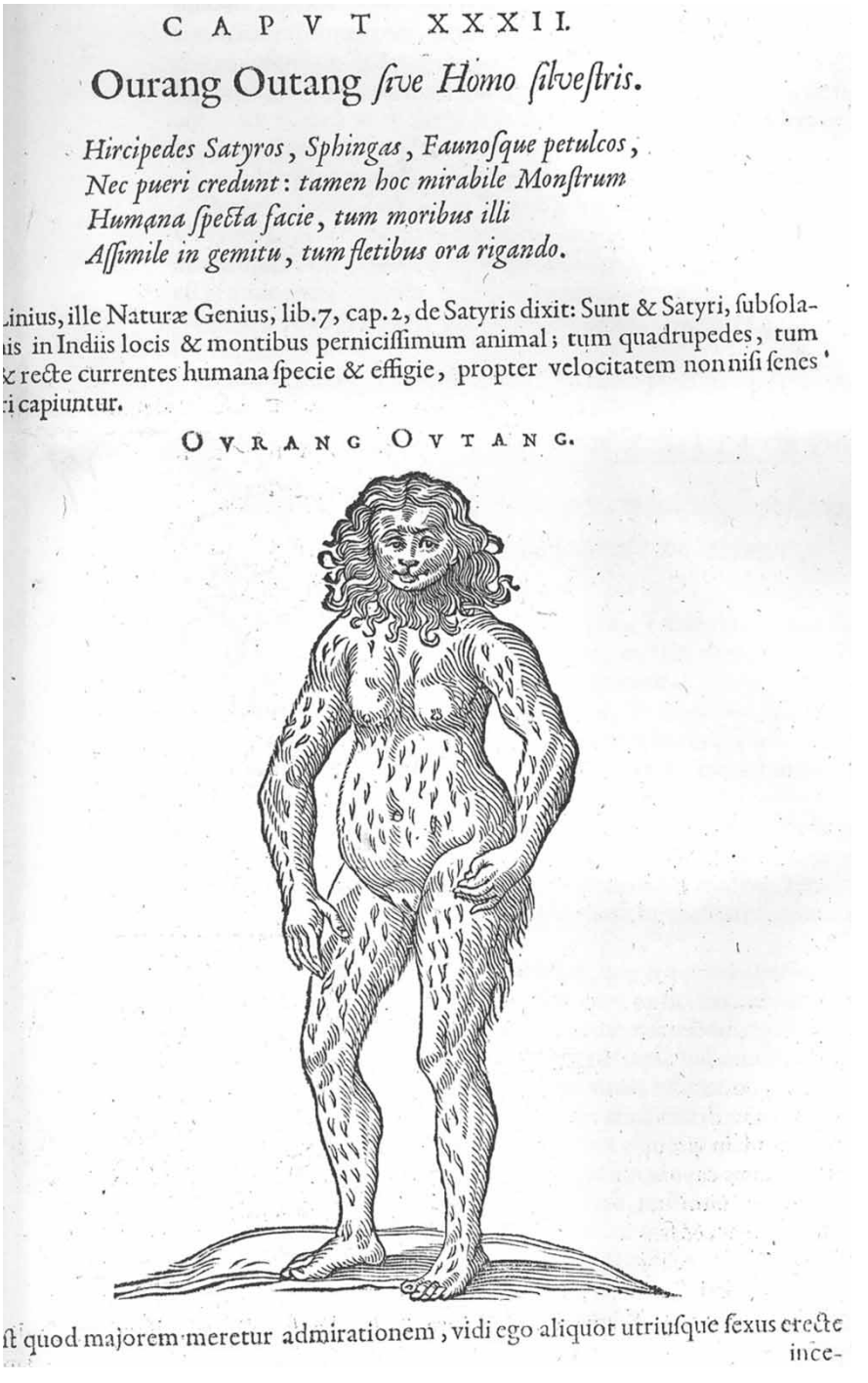

CAPVT XXXII.

Ourang Outang *ſive Homo ſilveſtris.*

Hircipedes Satyros, Sphingas, Faunoſque petulcos,
Nec pueri credunt: tamen hoc mirabile Monſtrum
Humana ſpecta facie, tum moribus illi
Aſſimile in gemitu, tum fletibus ora rigando.

Linius, ille Naturæ Genius, lib. 7, cap. 2, de Satyris dixit: Sunt & Satyri, ſubſola-
ris in Indiis locis & montibus perniciſſimum animal; tum quadrupedes, tum
& recte currentes humana ſpecie & effigie, propter velocitatem non niſi ſenes
ri capiuntur.

OVRANG OVTANG.

ſt quod majorem meretur admirationem, vidi ego aliquot utriuſque ſexus erecte
ince-

FIGURE 2. Illustration from Jacob de Bondt, 'Historiæ naturalis & medicæ Indiæ Orientalis', in Willem Piso's *De Indiæ utriusque re naturali et medica, libri quatuordecim* (1658). Published by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

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again declaring that the aim was to establish the truth behind the classical texts, the true nature of pygmies and satyrs. In his 1699 publication, Tyson concluded that the 'Pigmie' was not man, not ape, but something in between. Like Tulpius, Tyson made much of the ape's good table manners (Tyson 1966). As we have seen, Linnaeus used Tyson's illustration to depict the *Simia pygmaeus* in *Anthropomorpha*.

Several live specimens of African apes were transported to Europe in the 18th century. The famous 'Madame Chimpanzee' who visited London in 1738 caused much excitement and appeared to observers as 'perfectly of a human Specie' (Dougherty 1995: 65). In England, the naturalist George Edwards (1694–1773), one of Linnaeus' correspondents, was able to examine a badly damaged chimpanzee skin, writing that the 'ourang-outang' was to be found only in Africa, 'though there are voyagers to India that describe something like them' (O'Malley and Magoun 1962: 53). It thus emerges that 'ourang-outangs' observed, dissected and described in European scientific treatises, all known to Linnaeus, had been African chimpanzees, whereas knowledge of the East Indian ape was based on travel literature and hearsay. As Linnaeus placed his *Pygmaeus* and *Satyrus* in Africa, but used Bontius' 'ourang-outang' for his *Homo troglodytes*, it is appropriate to ask what 18th-century Europeans could have known about this human-like ape of the Malay world.

The first European to refer to the orang-utan was Marco Polo, who in reporting from 13th century Sumatra announced that he could confirm that unicorns (rhinoceros) did exist, but that pygmies, another 'Marvel of the East', did not. The pygmies were in fact manufactured in Sumatra, and Marco Polo could describe in great detail how monkeys with faces like men's were prepared and stuffed to make them look like men (Yule 1903: 285–6).

In the 17th century actual descriptions of orang-utan are found in several European travel accounts. The earlier mentioned Köping claimed to have seen a woman who had been raped by what he called an 'Orang Putans' and gave birth to a hybrid offspring, which immediately after being born ran off into the woods (Köping 1667: 121). From eastern Sumatra, the German Elias Hesse, who worked in the Dutch gold mines in northern Sumatra in the 1680s, provided what seems to be an eyewitness report of orang-utan behaviour, also maintaining that women who strayed too far into the jungle could become pregnant by these beings (Hesse 1931: 75–6).

First published in English in 1718, Daniel Beeckman's *Voyage to and from the island of Borneo* gave a detailed account of the behaviour of an animal which had been bought by his crew and kept on board. Here, adherence to European civil manners took centerstage: the ape was given to alcohol; she would not only take out a bottle of brandy from the case, but also replace it after drinking. She also slept in a posture like that of humans and expressed human emotions, would 'sigh, sob and cry'. Beeckman (1973: 37–8) reiterated local beliefs relating to the orang-utan, that they were in fact men, who had been 'Metamorphosed into Beasts for their Blasphemy', and he had also heard many other stories, 'too tedious to be inserted here'.

Another popular early 18th-century travel account, in all likelihood known to Linnaeus, was written by the Frenchman François Leguat, who reported seeing a female ape in Java.

> It conceal'd the Parts that distinguishes the Sexes, by one of its Hands which was neither hairy without nor within. Its Face had no other Hair upon it than the Eye-brows, and in general it much resembled one of those Grotesque Faces which the Female Hottentots have at the Cape. It made its Bed neatly every Day,

> went into it, laid its Head upon a Pillow, and cover'd its self with a Coverlet, after the manner practis'd among us.
>
> (Leguat 1891: 234–5)

Leguat was told that this animal was to be found only in Java, where some believed that 'this Beast was begot between an ape and a woman. When any female slave has committed a great fault . . . after the custom of the country, she commonly flies to the woods, and lives there much like one' (Leguat 1891: 234–5). The English country trader Alexander Hamilton, whose *New account of the East Indies* was first published in 1727, described seeing one of these animals 'of a melancholy disposition', who would blow his nose and 'throw away the Snot with his Fingers', and could keep a fire burning. Hamilton (1930: 70) had even seen one 'broyl a Fish to eat with his boyled rice'.

Similar stories were presented by other travellers, such as the Italian Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1651–1725) whose *Giro del Mondo* (1699) described a Bornean being called 'Beajus or Wild Man' who resembled man in showing emotions and general behaviour (Churchill 1704: 280). The terminology here goes a long way to illustrate the confusion regarding the distinctions between the orang-utan, myths about wild men of the forest, and 'different' ethnic groups. 'Beaujus' was in fact the European term for the Ngaju people, known by their neighbours as Bijau, whose territory stretched upriver from Banjermasin, the focus of European activity in Borneo (King 1993: 53). This meant that the 'Beajus' came to figure prominently in descriptions of Borneo, singled out as the 'noble savages' of the Malay world. A Swedish geography book published in 1766 described the interior of Borneo entirely through these Beajus, said to be the original inhabitants of the island, living in peace and love and hating dishonesty, which set them apart from the coastal inhabitants (Insulin 1772: 281–3).

Important here is the way in which themes set already by Bontius reflected the position of the red ape in Southeast Asian myth and life. This most human-like of primates has always held a special place in native imagination. The orang-utan, *Pongo pygmaeus*, is known under various local names, such as *mawas*, *m(a)ias*, or *kahieo* and is by nature a solitary animal. It was seldom seen, and therefore came to represent the mysterious unknown. The ape was hunted and its wild soul sacrificed in order to assure fertility from fields, which were seen as having been captured from the forest. In Borneo, the *mawas* was also perceived as the embodiment of the rude and uncultured, something which could be tamed and conquered by capturing and killing the animal. But there was also a benevolent side to the ape's character. Among the Iban peoples, apes are said to have given help during difficult times, and some tribes do not hunt the orang-utan because of the friendship between them and humankind (Bennett 1998: 3–5). The special relationship between the orang-utan and humans appears in many forms in both mythology and local legends and beliefs in Sumatra, Borneo and Java. The apes are seen as ancestors of humans; in other versions humans turn into orang-utan after death, which meant that they could understand human language.

A persistent feature in these legends was that of sexual encounters between male orang-utan and female humans. In Iban mythology the *mawas* was one of many forms of the war-spirit Klieng, who often descended to the real world and raped human females (Rijksen 1995: 292). In the island world, numerous tales tell of orang-utan attacking and raping women, and of 'mixed' liaisons producing half-human offspring. Charles Brooke (1990: 64) wrote in 1866 that any visitor to Borneo could 'load a

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diary' with Dyak tales of how humans went into the jungle and became orang-utan, where they would give birth to half-human children and could return to humanhood after many years. As we have seen, much of European reporting would in fact revolve around themes originating in local myth and beliefs. Beeckman's claim that humans had been turned into apes as punishment for blasphemy was again brought up when the Swedish naturalist Clas Fredrik Hornstedt (1758–1809) reported from Batavia in 1784 that a local sage had insisted on the orang-utan being a transformed human. Hornstedt was simply told to read the Quran, where it was clearly stated that people who desecrate the Sabbath turned into apes (Skott 2013b: 185).

Stories of apes raping women were reported from Africa at an early stage, but in the Malay world we find new twists to this theme. Liaisons between man and beast were ascribed to female promiscuity but could also be used for other purposes, such as criticism of the Dutch. In the mid 18th century the British travel writer Charles Frederick Noble (1762: 60–62) claimed that the Dutch mistreated their 'Malayan' female slaves to such an extent that they preferred a solitary life in the woods, where 'they might, by length of time, turn mad or insensibly brutish, and might have yielded to an unnatural commerce with some animals'. In modern times the prominence of sexual encounters between ape and man in European reporting has been seen through a gendered prism, in claims that European attempts to draw a line between humans and apes were determined by the conscious gendering of apes, where female promiscuity was highlighted and only female reproductive organs were examined and visually exposed (Schiebinger 1994). In the Malay world, this is easily explained by the fact that only female orang-utans were ever captured and seen. It was not until well into the 19th century that Europeans came in close enough contact with male orang-utans to be able to see their genitalia.

In the Malay world mythology surrounding man's relationship with the orang-utan was closely linked to perceptions of the 'wild man' of the forests, stories of small, hairy and humanlike creatures known from many parts of rural Indonesia. Recent anthropological research has suggested that stories of the *ebu gogo* of Flores, *mili mongga* of Sumba and *orang pendek* in Sumatra could in fact be grounded both in memories of anthropoid apes and encounters with human 'others' (Forth 2008). But these stories were not unique. The medieval ideas of the wild man and other European folklore (Bernheimer 1952) were used to buttress local stories of wild half-humans in the furthest east, and were particularly cherished in German literature. In 1669 Jürgen Andersen's popular travel account maintained that *Thiere/die halb Menschen* ('animals/the half humans'), inhabited parts of the East Indies, visualised by a satyr-like figure with a tail and pointed ears (Andersen and Iversen 1980: 28–29). The 'Waldmann' (man of the forest) was a familiar figure in European writing on Java throughout the 18th century.[10] The ultimate confusion regarding the 'ourang-outang', Waldman and other curious beings is highlighted in the illustration accompanying Thomas Salmon's *Modern part of universal history* where Java was presented through an 'orang ootan', resembling a naked man with long arms and curly hair (Figure 3).[11]

[10]See, for example, Jacob Wallenberg (1979: 183) for a Swedish account of Java in the 1780s.

[11]This figure was copied from the illustration accompanying Beeckman (1973). The 'hooded serpent' of Java was described in a well known travel account by the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Taveriner.

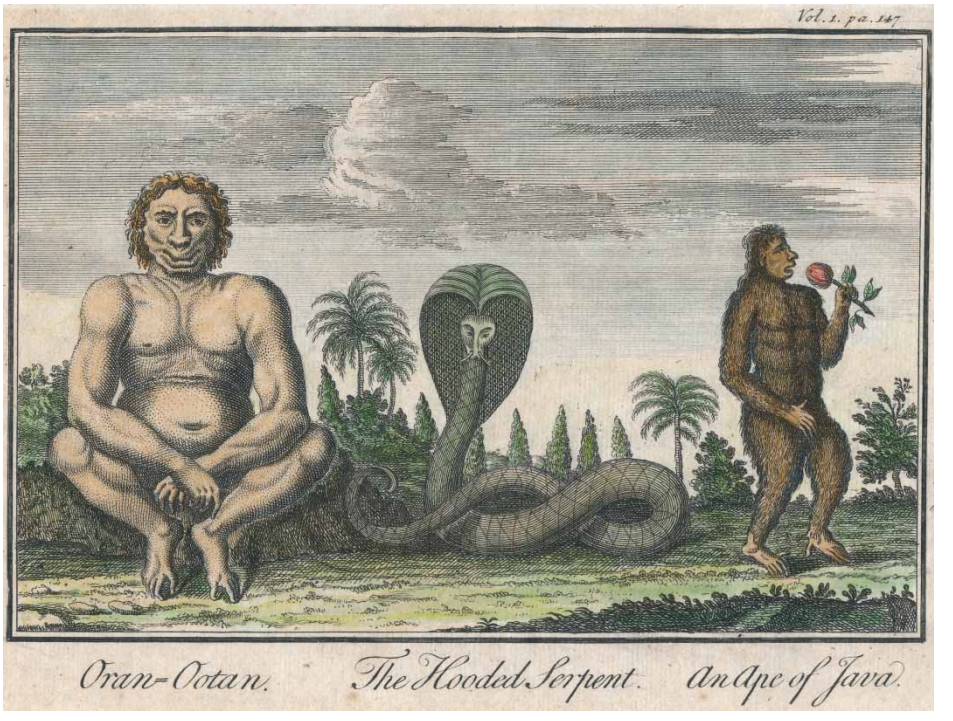

FIGURE 3. Illustration from Thomas Salmon's *Modern part of universal history* (1754). Private collection, C. Skott.

Hulu, hilir and men with tails

The new species of humans most ridiculed by Linnaeus' contemporaries was *Homo caudatus*, men with tails, in *Anthropomorpha* said to be inhabitants of the Nicobar and Andaman islands, Borneo and Sumatra. Linnaeus' placing of tailed men in the Nicobar and Andaman islands clearly had its origins in European ancient traditions, but the *Homo caudatus* also displays an interesting example of the workings of early modern 'ethnography'. Due to their strategic position along ancient trade routes, the Andaman and Nicobar islands acquired a special place in European imagination with strong associations to the marvellous races of the East. Pliny and Pausanias both mention nations of satyrs in the ocean, and Ptolemy's 'islands of the satyrs' have traditionally been seen to refer to the Andamans. It was therefore easy for the first Europeans who came in direct contact with tribes both hostile and frightened in their encounter with the intruders to simply confirm these earlier images. Through their physical appearance and way of life (in particular the practice of cannibalism), the islanders became strongly associated with various categories of savageness. In the early 14th century the Italian Friar Odoric of Pordenone and Marco Polo both described the Nicobareans as having dogs' heads, and the island's reputation as 'cannibal islands' has been persistent in European imagination until modern times (Yule 1913: 169).

Linnaeus' detailed description of the men with tails was lifted from the earlier mentioned Swedish travel account by Köping who was one of the many Swedes employed by

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the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the 17th century (Steenstrup 1982), and had travelled widely throughout Asia for ten years. His *Een kort beskriffning uppå trenne resor och peregrinationer, sampt konungarijket Japan* was published in 1667 and was reprinted several times to become the most popular travel book in Sweden in the 18th century. Linnaeus had known Köping's account since he was a boy and had referred to it in his early lectures at Uppsala.[12] We do not know whether the author had actually visited the Nicobar islands or simply borrowed the passage from earlier observers, as much of Köping's other material can also be found in German and Dutch travel accounts of the time.

However, as it happens, the people of the Nicobar islands could indeed reliably be said to have tails. In the early 16th century, one of the first English expeditions to the East anchored off the Nicobars. The chronicler of the expedition, James Lancaster, described the frightening sight which met the English:

> Priests or Sacrificers, all apparelled, but close to their bodies as if they had beene sewed in it: and upon their heads a paire of hornes turning backward, with their faces painted greene, blacke, and yellow, and their hornes also painted with the same colour. And behind them, upon their buttocks, a taile hanging downe, very much like the manner, as in some painted cloathes we paint the Divell in our Countrey. He demaunding wherefore they went in that attire, answer was made him, that in such forme the Divell appeared to them in their sacrifices, and therefore the Priests, his servants were so apparelled.
>
> (Foster 1940: 88–9)

The detail of this early ethnography of Nicobarean ritual would be unsurpassed for centuries. Published by Samuel Purchas in England, Lancaster's account reached a wide readership, and later compilers of travel literature extracted and recycled this text. Crucially, the passage explaining that this was the ceremonial attire of the islanders was subsequently omitted, but not the marvellous tail, which lived on as a hallmark of Nicobarean physique and took on a new life in the Swedish travel account.

As for Borneo and Sumatra, Europeans had described encounters with tailed people since the time of Marco Polo, who in Sumatra had seen men with tails, 'a palm in length'. These men, Marco Polo pointed out, were not from the city, but from the remote mountains of the interior (Yule 1903: 299). In several German travel accounts tailed men were seen as mountaineers, who were said to be running fast but were known to have been caught and tamed. Johann Wilhelm Vogel (1657–1723), a German working in the goldmines of Sumatra, described how the Dutch had caught a man and a woman equipped with tails in the interior of Sumatra. After being brought down to the coast, their tails were cut off, but they soon died of hunger, as they refused to eat 'human' food (*Allehanda utländska Märkwärdigheter och sällsamma Händelser 1784*).

[12] Linnaues had also used Köping's account in an unpublished lecture from 1753, where he described *Simia sapiens* (the first time the term *sapiens* was used), a species of ape who could play backgammon and keep watch over his fellow apes during the night to protect them from tigers (Broberg 1983: 176).

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Descriptions of tailed people can also be linked to the continued influence of *Mandeville's travels* (Letts 1953), where men with tails were listed among the marvellous beings in the furthest East. An inventory of accounts describing tailed men in early travel literature shows that most of these early sightings originated from the eastern archipelago, Formosa and remote parts of the Philippines (Bartels 1884). The Portuguese chronicler Antonio Galvão (?–1557) reported that the king of Tidore knew that the men of neighbouring islands had tails (Galvão 1862: 120). It is obvious that European reports of tailed men were derived from information based on hearsay or local perceptions of ethnically and culturally different groups, something which also can help to explain the composite origins of Linnaeus' troglodyte.

As seen above, the engraving depicting the *Homo troglodytes* (Figure 1) is an otherwise faithful copy of Bontius' 'ourang-outang'(Figure 2), apart from one detail, namely that the lion-like mane of Bontius' figure has been replaced by short curly hair. Köping's account had in fact contained some information not quoted by Linnaeus in *Anthropomorpha* such as that in the mountainous interiors of Amboina and Ternate there were groups of 'different' people, who come down to the coast at night to steal from the 'people of the country', and are therefore killed 'like pests'. They also, Köping (1667: 137) wrote, have a language peculiar to themselves, described as 'piping'.

The first European observers of the island world could draw on a variety of established, ancient images of the East, with a range of monstrous races seen to inhabit remote and unknown regions (Wittkower 1942). Anticipations of finding antipodes, people with long ears, amazons and cannibals were imaginatively combined with fresh eye witnessing or hearsay. Antonio Pigafetta, chronicler of Magellan's circumnavigation, provided an illustration of the workings of this earliest ethnography. On the island of Butuan, Pigafetta (2007: 78) reported, there was a peculiar kind of people called Benaian, all covered in hair, who 'eat only raw human hearts with the juice of oranges and lemons'. Pigafetta was also informed by his Malay pilot about another island, Arucheto, where men and women were 'not taller than one cubit, but have ears as long as themselves'. These people were described as fast runners, with 'shrill voices', they live in underground caves and subsist on fish and 'a substance that grows between the wood and the bark' (Pigafetta 2007: 116–7). Pigafetta's account was quoted, abridged and re-published throughout the early modern era. The long-eared peoples also appear in several places in Pires' *Suma Oriental*, derived from Moluccan information that the people of Papua had ears so long that they could wrap themselves in them (Pires 1944: 222). In the 18th century *Mandeville's travels* was still regarded by many as an authoritative source on Asia. Among the various marvellous tribes of the archipelago described by Mandeville we find the inhabitants of the remote island of Tracota, 'beasts without reason', cave dwellers who do not know how to build houses, but are frightened and run away from strangers, who lived on snakes and 'speak not, but hiss one til another as nedders do' (Letts 1953: 137–8.)

Although this kind of information was based on hearsay, Europeans acknowledged that islands visited were inhabited by distinct ethnic groups, who between themselves differed considerably both in physical appearance, customs and mode of living. This division into 'civilised' coastal inhabitants and 'savages' of the interior was most pronounced in reports from the eastern archipelago. Here we also find the physically different Papuans, migrants from the Papuan islands to eastern Halmahera where they had formed complex and intimate links with the rulers of Ternate (Andaya

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1993: 101–9) and so became visible in European writing (Gelpke 1993). Throughout the island world, Europeans referred to the Papuans as 'Cafres', or 'Negroes', whereas others used the local term 'Papua'. The curly hair was always pointed out as the Papuans' most prominent physical distinction.

At an early stage, and due to the special place of the Spice Islands in European reporting, the *hulu* peoples of the Moluccas called *alfoer* by the Dutch, became prominent in European reports. This term initially referred only to the Alifuru, who inhabited the interior of northern Halmahera. Studies of early modern Moluccas have shown how the complex relationship between the Alifuru and surrounding states rested on mutual dependency. The Alifuru were also fiercely loyal to the sultans of Ternate and Tidore, and this special relationship included common myths, and an extensive exchange of women and goods (Andaya 1993: 97).

The *alfoer* figured prominently in early Dutch descriptions of Amboina. The Dutch naturalist Rumpf described these groups in his *Ambonsche Landbeschrijving,* a description of Amboina, a manuscript probably dating from the 1670s which was kept by the VOC. Rumpf's description of the inhabitants of the wild mountains of Ceram contained a variety of categories. They were described as 'large, strong and savage', sharp-sighted and fast, eating only wild animals, of lighter colour than the Ambonese, and wearing only scanty clothing made of bark. These groups were identified through their different language and savage behaviour, but Rumpf also singled out one particular *alfoer* group, who lived high up in trees 'because they dare not trust even those of their own nation, as they surprize each other during the night, and kill whoever they take hold of' (Stavorinus 1969: 347–61). Several of Rumpf's' designated characteristics for the *alfoer* can be recognised in Köping's account. In his influential work *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, published in the 1720s, François Valentijn (1724, II) made full use of Rumpf's unpublished writings, ensuring that the description of the *alfoer* reached a European readership.

The white people of the East Indies

As seen above, the crucial characteristic ascribed by Linnaeus' to the *Homo troglodytes* was the whiteness. There are two ways in which this relates specifically to the Malay world. Firstly, relative whiteness had been used in reports from the region before the arrival of the Europeans. Arab reports from the archipelago used skin colour to mark difference between the various ethnic groups, describing people with 'white skin of astonishing beauty who hide in the summits of mountains' (Tibbetts 1979: 56). In European imagination the people of the 'southern continent' were often described as white, and Portuguese chroniclers of the Malay world made extensive use of this method. Eredia (1930: 145, 245) distinguished mountain tribes of Borneo as 'certain white people, with long hair, who hold no communication with the other people of the Island'; Tomé Pires (1944: 222) described the islands east of Moluccas as housing people who are 'nearly white' and Duarte Barbosa (1921: 204) described groups of 'white folk' in Celebes.

The idea of the Malay world inhabited by groups of 'white' people had then been in place for centuries. But *Homo troglodytes* was also called *Homo nocturnus*, 'night man', because these people were only active during the night and unable to see during the day. Although it has been noted that this was based on observations of individual

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cases of albinism, which was not understood at the time, commentators on Linnaeus' *Homo troglodytes* failed to acknowledge that white and day blind people in fact figured prominently in European reporting from Malacca, Java and the eastern archipelago. Dutch and German accounts referred to these as *Kakerlakken* (cockroaches), a term used by Linnaeus himself in correspondence with the Scottish Judge Lord Monboddo (see below.) Jürgen Andersen, for example, explained that the *Kackerlac* was '*eine art Leute*' (a kind of people) of Malacca who resembled cockroaches because they are only active during the night, which is when they go about all their business. They cannot see at all during the day, but sleep until the sun sets and their eyesight returns. In stature, proportion and colour they were said to resemble Europeans, they have grey eyes and yellowish long hair, and walk with their feet bent inwards. These people, Andersen claimed, were also found on an island not far from Malacca and in Batavia (Andersen and Iversen 1980: 102).

The best known description of the *kakerlakken* is found in an account initially compiled by Johan Nieuhof, who travelled widely in the East in the 1660s and 1670s. The posthumously published travel account *Zee- en Lant-Reise door verscheide Gewesten van Oostindien* (1682) was heavily edited, with much of the material presented culled from earlier Dutch writers and also possibly unpublished material available in Amsterdam (Nieuhof 1988: xi). Here, the *Kakerlakken* were again described as 'a peculiar sort of men' in Malacca, who were blind during the day and could only see at night, who look like Europeans, and 'can tell money, work, and do any other things in the dark'. Nieuhof claimed that the name came 'from a certain monstrous creature in the Indies', and but are also found in Africa' (Nieuhof 1988: 180). During the 18th century Nieuhof's travel account became one of the main sources for European compilers of cosmographies and 'geography books' and so gave the *kakerlakken* of Malacca wide exposure among European readers.

Linnaeus also mentioned Java as a habitat for the *Homo troglodytes*. Several European writers described *kakerlakken* in Java. Perhaps most important was the earlier mentioned, popular travel writer François Leguat, who told his readers about a 'nation' of 'Chacrelats', of which Leguat claimed to have seen several of both sexes in Batavia. These people were described as all white and fair, 'but what is most Remarkable in them, it that their Eyes cannot endure the Light, and they always see best a-nights, so that they turn Night into Day, and Day into Night. I have often met of them trudging along with their Eyes almost shut, because they were not able to look on the Light' (Leguat 1891: 270).

Another well known travel account was that of the Dutchman Cornelis de Bruyn, who gave a detailed description of an encounter with a female 'cockroach' at the court of the king of Bantam (Banten). This lady was a concubine of the king, 'fat and very fair, with fine light hair, but her cheeks were bloated, and her eyes half shut'. In conversation this royal lady asked de Bruyn to guess from where she came. Because of her fairness de Bruyn suggested Russia: 'However, I was mistaken; for she was a mountaineer of the isles situated southeast of Ternate, the inhabitants of which are called Kackerlackes.' Proof that the *kakerlakken* indeed were a different 'race' was also presented, as de Bruyn was shown six small children by this woman, all with 'complexions white as snow' (de Bruyn 1737: 107).[13] In this context, Köping's 'travel lie' becomes part of an established

[13]The ruler of Bantam also told de Bruyn that he was the first European to be invited to the inner court.

pattern of reporting from the Malay world, consistent with early modern 'ethnography of difference', where the curious and unusual would take centre stage.

Although albinism was not understood in the 18th century, we now know that this is a congenital disorder caused by the absence of pigment in the skin, hair and eyes, which means intolerance to ultraviolet light, i.e. daylight. Albinism is also associated with vision defects, such as photophobia, which causes discomfort and pain in the eye when exposed to light, and nystagmus (involuntary eye movement) and astigmatism, resulting in reduced and blurred vision. In many non-European societies, especially in Africa, albinism is associated with superstition and a mystical reverence for individuals affected by this condition.

Europeans early acknowledged the prominence of 'white' people in the Malay world. A chapter entitled 'Des Blafards & des Negres blancs' in Cornelius de Pauw's *Reserches Philosophiques sur les Américains, ou mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'histoire de l'espèce humaine* (1770), one of the first ethnographical treatises of its kind, saw Africa and '*à l'extrêmité de l'Asie méridionale*' as the regions with the most cases of albinism. But it was no coincidence that de Bruyn encountered the albino lady at the court of the ruler of Banten, as albinos had a special and visible place in the courts of the archipelago, along with dwarfs and other individuals with physical abnormalities. Jesuit sources have suggested that the royal retinues in the Moluccas included female dwarfs and female hunchbacks whose bones the rulers had broken in their childhood, and in the early 18th century François Valentijn reported that the ruler of Hitu and his brother in Amboina were themselves albinos (Andaya 1993: 66; Barbosa 1921: 203; Jacobs 1971: 115; Valentijn 1724, II: 146). De Pauw (1772: 18) was in fact able to quote an unnamed traveller having a conversation with the 'Emperor of Java', who had told the European that it was ancient custom to keep albinos, all his predecessors and other sovereigns of the islands possessed them, as their religion promised a reward for those who took care of these unfortunate creatures.

It is also well known that isolated ethnic groups exhibit larger numbers of cases of albinism due to genetic factors. This seems indeed to be the case among the 'Papuans' of New Guinea. In the 1580s the Portuguese sailor de Brito reported from the area now known as the McCluer Gulf that 'on some islands there are white people with red hair and freckles'. In fact, there were so many albinos in this part of New Guinea that during World War II the Japanese initially arrested them, taking them for Europeans trying to escape internment (Gelpke 1994: 135–6, note 49).

Braad and the troglodytes of Malacca

Linnaeus' ultimate confirmation of the continued existence of the *Homo troglodytes* was the eyewitness report by his countryman a Mr Braad, who had visited Malacca a few years earlier. This reference has not previously been examined, and it is not immediately clear what is referred to here. Christopher Henrik Braad (1728–1781) was an employee of the Swedish East India Company, who in the 1740s had sailed to Canton several times as a supercargo, before receiving instructions to go to India to investigate possibilities for the Swedes to expand their activities there. Based in Surat, Braad would spend almost seven years in India, travelling to Ceylon, Malabar, around the Bay of Bengal and further

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to the Malay Peninsula.[14] According to his own curriculum vitae Braad visited Kedah and other places on the 'Malley' coast in 1751 and again in 1754.[15] Throughout his travels, he sent reports, plants and other naturalia to the Company directors in Gothenburg, and it seems that some of this material was forwarded to Linnaeus in Uppsala. It furthermore appears that the two men met or corresponded shortly after Braad's return, at a time when Linnaeus was working on the tenth edition of the *Systema Naturae*.[16]

Curiously, we know about Braad's visit to Malacca through the writings of the eccentric Judge James Burnet (Lord Monboddo, 1714–1799), a man of the Scottish Enlightenment, who was intensely interested in men with tails as well as the 'ourang-outang'. Claiming that it was 'impossible to draw a line betwixt the Orang Outang and the dumb persons among us', Monboddo promoted the view that it was only speech that separated man and ape (Barnard 1995).[17] During the work on his main publication, *Origin and progress of language* Monboddo read the published Latin version of *Anthropomorpha*, and had written to Linnaeus asking about Köping's book and the passage describing the tailed men in particular. Linnaeus' reply is now lost, but the letter was quoted by Monboddo in a long footnote, which listed various sources both on the troglodyte and the tailed man, providing a telling illustration of the confusion over these beings but also the continued importance of travel literature as sources of information for European 'science of man'.[18] Crucially, Monboddo wrote that Linnaeus' letter had mentioned Braad, as having met a 'serious, upright and trustworthy' man in Malacca who had described the 'nocturnal man' to him in conversation (Burnet 1967: 237, note).[19]

Braad's visits to Malacca are described in two surviving reports. One is a manuscript describing the journey of the ship Götha Leyon to Surat and several other places in the East Indies.[20] The other manuscript dated 1754, entitled '*Historiske Anmärkningar om Bengala; Dess invånare, och närvarande Tillstånd*' (Historical remarks on Bengal, its inhabitants and present state) is addressed to an unknown gentleman, presumably Linnaeus. Here, Braad described another sort of peculiar beings:

> Something in particular which deserve a special mention are a kind of wild humans (if they may be called human) which are to be found 4 to 5 [Swedish] miles from Malacca and have neither government or religion, but in everything else are similar to the other Malays, excepting the language, which they do not understand.

[14]See Jeremy Franks (1997).

[15]Braad, 'Curriculum vitae', Royal Library, Stockholm.

[16]Four short letters from Linneaeus to Braad have survived. These are all dated 1763 and reveal that the two were by then personally acquainted.

[17]See also Wokler (1988: 145–68); Barnard (1995: 71–82); Cloyd (1972); Sherwin (1958).

[18]Except for Monboddo's published letter to Linnaeus no other correspondence between the two is known.

[19]Braad is quoted saying 'Vixit in Malacca, siquis alius vir gravis, candidus, et sincerus, vidit hominem nocturnum, et descripsit in familiari colloquio; omnia quae ego novi antea ita sincere, ut de ejus side dubitare nequeam, mihi retulit'.

[20]'*Beskrifning På Skeppet Götha Leyons Till Surat och Åtskillige Andre Indianske Orter. Uppsatt och i ödmiukhet öfwerlemnad Till Höglofda Swenska Ostindiska Compagniet af Christ: Hind: Braad*' is in the archive of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm.

> They are said to be naked, and have short hair, which they are said to tear off in order to facilitate their moving among the trees in which they have their huts, and live mostly on fruits. They mainly collect dammer (a resin) which they exchange for rice and tobacco, which they love very much. Sometimes they hunt with bows, which they are skilled in using. I first thought that these were a kind of the big apes which in Java are called Orang outang, but I changed my mind after hearing from so many people about their different way of life, and that a couple of years ago the 'Sabandar' of Malacca had been sent inland in order to investigate this matter. He had brought with him two individuals who were dressed up like his other slaves, but as soon as they got a chance they ran off into the woods.
>
> (Braad, '*Historiske Anmärkningar*', pp. 16–17; my translation)

Braad here provided a description of the tribal groups of the Malay Peninsula, now referred to as Orang Asli. The origins of these peoples and nature of their relationship with the coastal Malays have been debated by modern historians and ethnographers, but it is acknowledged that the forest dwellers had ancient links with the coast as suppliers of a variety of commodities of the forests. The forest people appear in early Malay literature such as the *Sejarah Melayu*, and throughout the early modern era the relationship was ambivalent. While engaging in trade with the people of the forest the Malay both feared and despised the jungle people, they were believed to possess magical powers but equally seen as savages.[21]

In the 19th century the tribal groups would become the focus of anthropological research into the racial origins of the peoples of the Malay world. Prior to this, only a few Europeans mention these tribes (Andaya 2008: 209; Leary 1994). The early 17th-century Portuguese writer Eredia (1930: 30, 41), whose manuscript was not published until the 20th century, saw the jungles behind Malacca as inhabited by 'negroes with curly hair who resemble the satyres', cannibal savages but also talented sorcerers, transforming themselves into tigers and communicating with the devil.

In his report Braad referred to an expedition to the interior undertaken by the 'Sabandar' of Malacca. It seems that Braad's description of the forest dwellers was in fact partly based on Dutch reports. These were observations made by the VOC official Jan Jansz Menie during an expedition to the interior in 1642, which has been preserved in the Dutch governor Balthasar Bort's report on Malacca in 1678 (Andaya 2008: 219–20; Brenner 1927). If indeed Braad had had access to this report, he would have had additional detailed information for Linnaeus. Menie's report contained a long description of tribal ways of life, food, dress (bark fibre tied around the body) and the distrust with which these groups viewed outsiders after having been deceived by the Minangkabau. The forest people are here described as leading a 'savage life, but not of cruel temper', who live on fruit and have a language of their own, with hair cut short, in order not to get tangled up in branches in the jungle.Their skin colour was described as 'whitish yellow in color, have a swaying gait, almost as they were dancing' and with a very strange language (Brenner 1927: 52–4).

How Braad obtained the Dutch report remains unclear. Nevertheless, it has emerged that Linnaeus could have been presented with three observations from Malacca: the 'night man' described by a local resident, a description of the curious

[21]For a detailed examination of this relationship, see Andaya (2008: chapter 7).

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beings of the interior having been captured and brought to the city, and a longer report of tribal life provided by the Dutch official. Crucially, these sightings were recent and detailed eyewitness reports, largely complying with the criteria of Linnaean science. To Linnaeus this would be the ultimate proof of the continued existence of a 'nation' of troglodytes.

The troglodyte dismissed

The troglodyte of the Malay world would not be long lived. Several of Linnaeus' contemporaries, most notably Comte Buffon, ridiculed the *Homo troglodytes* as a misconception and obvious misreading of sources. As ever, Linnaeus was sensitive to criticism. The last edition of *Systema Naturae* (1778) placed the troglodyte firmly in the animal world, as the name was taken over by one of the ever growing numbers of species of apes. It seems, however, that until the mid 1760s Linnaeus held on to the idea of the troglodyte as a human species. News arriving from London about a troglodyte girl from Jamaica having been caught and brought to England excited him greatly. The girl was reported to be all white and unable to tolerate daylight, but could see well in the dark. Linneaus urged his student Per Bjerchén in London to visit and examine the girl. Bjerchén reported back that the girl seemed *förnuftig* (rational) and she speaks 'like we do', but added that he was increasingly convinced that the girl was not a troglodyte but a 'strange kind of white Negroe'. Linnaeus was undeterred. He begged his old correspondent John Ellis in London to go and examine the 'animal', to report on the colour of her skin, eyesight and shape of eyelids, any whistle in the voice, space between teeth and any peculiarities in the organs of generation. Again, Ellis wrote back reporting that he had indeed visited 'the young woman you think is a Troglodyte', but that she, excepting the whiteness in all respects resembled a Negro: she could in fact not read in the dark but spoke English well (*Bref och skrifvelser 1908*: 210–1). Despite this discouraging news Linnaeus did not give up. He pleaded with the king of Sweden to provide assistance to catch a troglodyte in its natural habitat. In 1764 he sent a description of the *Homo troglodytes* to Claes Grill, one of the directors of the Swedish East India Company. Gril soon confirmed that the board of directors in Gothenburg had instructed all its supercargoes to search for and obtain such a creature 'with good words and money' (*Bref och skrifvelser 1910*: 225–6). Although the troglodyte hunt is mentioned in Swedish correspondence from Canton around this time, not one single troglodyte could be purchased, and the project seems to have been abandoned.

The last decades of the 18th century also saw the disappearance of the figure of the noble 'Orang-Outang' of the Enlightenment, as a decisive line between man and ape was being drawn in a series of anatomical treatises. The first specimens of orang-utans arrived in Europe in the 1780s, when the Dutch anatomist Pieter (Petrus) Camper (1722–1789) was sent five animals from Batavia. His dissection confirmed not only that the orang-utan lacked the anatomical structure for speech, but also for erect posture and other traits which had been central to earlier discussions of the 'humanity' of apes (Camper 1799).[22] A few decades later the German anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach strongly attacked ideas of 'cultured' apes, writing that Linnaeus'

[22]This account was published in English in *Philosophical Transactions* in 1799.

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invention of a second species of human was based on 'fables' so intricate 'that we may easily pardon those who have allowed themselves to be deceived' (Bendyshe 1865: 132: see also Spencer 1995: 17).

On other fronts, however, the half-humans of the Malay Peninsula lived on. The Frenchman Pierre Sonnerat reported from Malacca in 1780.

> At Malacca there are beings well known to be Anthropophagi, as well as others, who have only a human appearance. They live in trees, and if any traveller passes by their retreat, they come down and devour him. There are others not so fierce, who wander in the woods, having no connexion even with creatures that resemble them. They live on fruit and roots, and only cohabit with women when forced by nature: which seems to prove, that in a state of nature man has a set time for his amours, like other animals. Some of theses savages are a little civilized, and traffic with the Malays, but without having any communication with each other. They put the Calin they have gathered on the mountains, at the foot of the tree they inhabit. The Malay, in exchange, puts fruit, and other trifles he has brought, which the savage takes as soon as he is gone. Their language is not known to the Malays. I have seen one of these savages, who was taken very young, and is now the servant of a counsellor, but very lazy. There are also found a kind of men whose feet are turned directly contrary to ours; however, though I was assured of the fact by the commandant of the place, it wants some new observations to confirm it.
>
> (Sonnerat 1789: 105–6)

Confusion regarding the tribes of the interior would continue. In his 1800 description of the Malay Peninsula the British naturalist Thomas Pennant (1800: 39) still referred to Sonnerat, but added: 'I wish he had fallen to the lot of a Scotch Judge; what a treasure would he have been to Lord Monboddo! Seriously, M. Sonnerat must have collected some tales of the ourang outang, possibly a native of this country'. It would take until the 1840s before a more systematic European enquiry into the different forest dwelling groups would be undertaken, marking the beginnings of systematic anthropological research into the tribal peoples of the Malay Peninsula (see Govor and Manickam 2014 in this issue).

The white people of the Malay world were also gradually scientifically explained. J.G. König, a physician at the Danish mission station in Tranquebar,[23] had written to Linnaeus in 1772 that from his long experience of the East Indies, he could only conclude that these individuals were born of black parents and most likely were born with a kind of disease (Broberg 1975: 186). This argument was also central when the *kakerlakken* were debated at length in the first volumes of the proceedings of the Batavian Academy of Sciences. A 1780 article describing a female *kakerlakk* from the Papuan islands, written by the long time Batavian resident Joshua van Iperen, attempted to show not only that the whiteness was a pathological condition, but that all *kakerlakken* also had other skin diseases (van Iperen 1780). Within a few decades, the white and day blind *Homo troglodytes* was speedily whisked into the field of pathology, as scientists began to see albinism as a defect which only could affect individuals.

[23]Now Tharangambadi in India.

In the end, it was *Homo caudatus* that would survive the longest. The tailed men were still very much remembered when British attempts to establish facilities on the Andaman islands in the 1790s resulted in several descriptions of the islands being published in Britain. One of these dealt extensively with Linnaeus' tailed men, suggesting that it was the bark clothing used by the natives which had been misinterpreted, the tail was simply a narrow piece of bark, hanging 'round their waist and between their tights, with one extremity hanging down behind'. The Andaman islanders themselves were carefully examined, but it was concluded that there were 'no sort of projection whatever on the os Coccygis of either sex' (Fontana 1799).

As the tailed men of the Andamans disappeared, various sightings of tailed men were still reported from Sumatra and Borneo. A British traveller to Borneo was told by locals that Bornean tails were very stiff 'so that all the people sat on seats in which there was a hole made for this remarkable appendage to fit in' (St John 1986: 40). In 1877 the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* could report that four men with tails had been found on board a British ship transporting Muslim pilgrims to Mecca. Two were from Borneo and two from Sumatra. The ship's captain could give a detailed description of the tails, which were 14 inches long, and reported that the men were 'hairy about the chest, though not particularly so about the face'. They were embarrassed by their tails, but appeared 'intelligent, and were fond of using their tongues and being in company, and apparently had no impediment in their speech' (*Journal of the Anthropological Institute 1877*: 192). In the 1880s the Norwegian scientist Carl Bock undertook an expedition to the interior of Borneo partly in order to find the truth about these beings. Not finding a single man with a tail, Bock came up with the novel explanation that it was the Borneans themselves who had consciously duped foreigners to believe in men with tails after reading Darwin's *Origins of Species*! (Bock 1985: 144).

Several Dutch expeditions were launched to investigate members of remote tribes in Sumatra, but at the end of the 19th century there was still no agreement on whether tailed men existed or not (Bartels 1884: 82–6).

Conclusion

This article has attempted to piece together the lineages of European knowledge about the Malay world which led Carl Linnaeus to believe that this region could be the home of species of humans who could not be classified as *Homo sapiens*. Whereas earlier examinations of the *Homo troglodytes* and *Homo caudatus* have dismissed them as based on unreliable travel literature imbued with ideas of a fantastic and marvellous East, my untangling of Linnaeus' sources and European knowledge of the Malay world has revealed a complex picture. The various facets which made up the troglodyte and the tailed men were seamlessly intertwined, sometimes overlapping but also, as others have already argued, often a result of confusion and misunderstandings. Several elements unique to the Malay world have emerged, which each contributed to the conception of the *Homo troglodytes*: the human-like orang-utan, myths of wildmen, the prominence of an early modern 'ethnography of difference' which favoured the curious, i.e. cases of albinism observed by Europeans, something which ultimately reflected the special place of albinos in Southeast Asian societies. I have attempted to show that European writing about the Malay world often reflected views held by coastal 'native informants'

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of the peoples of the interior, a result of an often ambivalent and complex relationship between the ethnically different groups. As numerous historians have already shown, the peoples of the interior were both feared and despised, but there was also mutual dependence, not least in economic matters. This theme, the interaction between *hulu* and *hilir*, upstream and downstream, has been seen as a long running theme in the political and economic history of the early modern Malay world, but has here been seen as propelling European scientific discourse.

The case of the troglodyte has also highlighted the workings of early modern ethnography. In her classic study of early European ethnography Margaret Hogden (1964: 167–9) argued that there was always a twofold way of explaining the new: what was seen confirmed the expected, but familiar imagery was also the most convenient tool for explaining the new. The earliest European encounters with the Malay world, the abode of the ancient 'Marvels of the East', can therefore be taken as a prime example of the dynamics between pre-perceptions, new observations and gathering of information. Anthony Reid has indeed ascribed accounts of fabulous creatures to the division between *hulu* and *hilir*, but also suggested that physical peculiarities were further 'exaggerated' by Europeans (Reid 1994: 271). Here, it would be tempting to further reconsider the empirical origins of the marvellous races of the ancients. As we have seen, the practice of local rulers keeping dwarfed pygmies', customs of extending earlobes, tattoos and cannibalism have survived in the island world until modern times, and the first Europeans anchoring off the coast of Borneo were actually met by amazon women armed with bows and 'javelins'.[24] The most curious of the marvellous beings, however, has only recently come to light.

As Linnaeus' troglodyte quietly left the scientific scene, the diversity of the Malay world continued to fascinate Europeans. William Marsden, whose *History of Sumatra* (1783) would become the first systematic description of the peoples of Sumatra, was intrigued by the physiology of the tribes of the island's interior, in particular the mysterious unknown *Gugu*, said to be a hairy forest dweller. He was also mystified as to why certain Sumatran tribes had curly hair. In a letter to Stamford Raffles Marsden wrote that the occurrence of curly hair surely must be one of the most intriguing issues in the history of the human race, 'or, I was going to say, in Anthropology, which, if it not a word, ought to be'.[25]

Anthropology did become a word, and in the late 20th century the anthropologist Gregory Forth did fieldwork in the Nage region in Flores. There he heard stories of how local inhabitants had long been living in a stable relationship with groups of anthropomorphous beings (*ebu gogo*), living in a cave on the slope of the volcano Ebu Lobo. Events had taken place several generations earlier, whereby the local humans killed these creatures after having had enough of the *ebu gogo* stealing from fields and abducting children. Forth (1998) argued that the Nage distinguished the *ebu gogo* stories from spirits, and it was consequently possible that these stories might have some empirical grounding. Similar stories were told in other parts of the archipelago (Forth 1998: 104–6;

[24]See, for example Purchas (1905, II: 203; Eisler (1995: 48–9, 76).

[25]Marsden to Stamford Raffles, undated, Raffles Collection, Mss Eur. 742/2, OIOC, London. In it, Marsden suggested that curly hair occurred only in people who did not oil their hair like the Malays, but he also thought that the frizzy hair of some Sumatrans might be just an occasional occurrence, comparable to some Europeans having curly hair.

2008). Around the same time paleo-anthropologists and archaeologists working in Flores found the remains of a small humanoid, and in 2004 the remarkable discovery of a new species of the genus *Homo*, named *Homo floresiensis*, was announced. Some of these remains were as recent as 13,000 years ago, and it was seen as likely that the *floresiensis* would have interacted with *Homo sapiens*. The announcement sparked intense media interest, where local people were interviewed, describing the small people as 'long haired', potbellied, with long arms and fingers who walked 'with a slightly awkward gait', spoke in murmurs and climbed trees (Forth 2005). What followed was a heated debate, where it was argued that the *Homo floresiensis* was in fact a *Homo sapiens* affected with disordered growth and microcephaly, or a result of dwarfing in an isolated population of *Homo erectus*, whereas others have maintained that this new species of humans will transform our understanding of human evolution. Compellingly, so far this debate does not seem to have been brought to a conclusion.

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